

b) REMARKS

The Examiner has required restriction between Group I, claims 1-30, drawn to a process for treating exhaust gas from plasma processing; and Group II, claims 31-50, drawn to an apparatus for treating exhaust gas from plasma processing. The Examiner has alleged as a reason for requiring restriction that the apparatus may be used for treating plasma gas that has been used for other than substrate or film processing. The grounds for restriction are respectfully traversed.

Each of the features of the claimed apparatus finds a counterpart limitation in the process claims of Group I. In apparatus claim 31, a processing space for plasma processing is also present in process claim 1. The exhaust means for exhausting the processing space and the exhaust line connecting the processing space to the exhaust means of claim 31 are also found as elements of process claim 1. Likewise, the chemical reaction inducing means and the means for blocking plasma of claim 31 find counterparts in process claim 1 in the step of causing chemical reaction and preventing plasma in the processing space to reach the chemical reaction inducing means.

Accordingly, a search of the claims of Group II will necessarily include the subject matter of Group I and vice versa. Therefore, there is no material burden on the Examiner engendered by examining both Group I and Group II claims.

This is just another arbitrary attempt by the Patent Office to extract additional searching fees from Applicants without any real justification. There is a clear unity of invention between Groups I and II and, if this was a PCT case, there would be no restriction required. Therefore, the restriction requirement should be withdrawn.

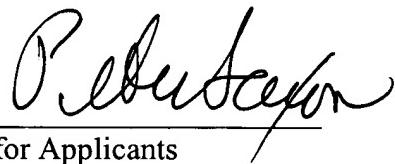
As required, Applicants provisionally elect with traverse Group I, claims 1-30, drawn to a process for treating exhaust gas.

An early and favorable action on the merits is respectfully requested.

In the event that the restriction requirement is not withdrawn, Applicants request that the Examiner rejoin the claims of Group II, claims 31-50, in the event that allowable subject matter is found in the claims of Group I, under M.P.E.P. §821.04.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicants

Registration No. 24947

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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